HIGHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

For completion by The Executive

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1. Purpose

To ensure that academic standards are maintained and assessment is carried out in a fair and accurate manner; and to provide a means of appeal from assessment decisions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Students registered on a higher education or professional course leading to a qualification at Level 4 or above.
- Higher Education Staff.

3. Policy Statement

The College is committed to ensuring that Higher Education assessment is conducted fairly, consistently, accurately and transparently, maintaining academic standards and supporting student learning and achievement. Assessment will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of awarding bodies and validating partners, and will provide appropriate opportunities for feedback, review and appeal. The College will ensure that assessment practices are inclusive, free from bias and responsive to students' disclosed learning needs.

4. Definitions

Assessment – The process of evaluating a student's work against specified learning outcomes and assessment criteria to determine achievement.

Awarding Body – An organisation responsible for awarding qualifications and setting requirements relating to assessment and quality assurance.

Partner HEI – A Higher Education Institution with which the College works to deliver or validate Higher Education programmes.

Academic Standards – The standards students are required to achieve to gain a particular academic award or qualification.

Internal Verification/Moderation – The process used to ensure assessment decisions are consistent, fair and meet the requirements of the relevant awarding body or partner HEI.

Standardisation – Activities undertaken to ensure assessors apply assessment criteria consistently across programmes and students.

Assessment Evidence – Work produced or submitted by a student to demonstrate achievement of the required learning outcomes or assessment criteria.

Resubmission – A further opportunity for a student to submit assessment evidence following an initial assessment, where permitted under the relevant awarding body or partner HEI regulations.

Academic Misconduct – Conduct relating to assessment that breaches academic requirements or regulations.

Assessment Appeal – A formal request for an assessment decision to be reviewed in accordance with the applicable appeals process.

Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances – Exceptional circumstances that may have affected a student's ability to undertake or complete an assessment.

Reasonable Adjustments – Appropriate arrangements made to ensure that students with disclosed learning needs or disabilities are not disadvantaged during assessment.

Assessment Board - Confirms grades, progression, and assessment outcomes.

Award Board - Confirms the final qualification and classification to be awarded to students.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

Ensure the policy aligns with relevant legislation and is effectively implemented.

5.2 Principal and Senior Leaders

Oversee and ensure the policy is effectively implemented.

5.3 Staff

Comply with the policy and participate in relevant training**.**

5.4 Students

To follow the procedure

6. Procedures

Please refer to appendix

7. Monitoring and Review

To be reviewed every 2 years**.**

8. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy should be read and applied in accordance with:

Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), to support fair and non-discriminatory assessment practices.

QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, particularly the expectations relating to assessment, academic standards and quality.

Assessment practices are aligned with OfS Condition B4 and are designed to be valid, reliable, inclusive, and appropriate for demonstrating student achievement of course learning outcomes

Relevant Awarding Body requirements and regulations, which the existing protocol identifies as requirements that the College's assessment arrangements must observe.

Partner Higher Education Institution (HEI) regulations and validation requirements, where programmes are delivered through partnership or franchise arrangements. The earlier protocol specifically states that the validating HEI's regulations apply to such provision

9. Training and Awareness

Staff involved in Higher Education assessment receive appropriate induction, training and ongoing development to ensure they understand and apply assessment, verification and moderation requirements, including those of relevant Awarding Bodies and validating partners.

10. Environmental Impact/Sustainability Considerations (if applicable)

No significant environmental impact has been identified. Where appropriate, the use of electronic assessment, submission and feedback supports the reduction of paper use

11. Legal Requirements/Issues outside of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Failure to comply with this protocol may result in student appeals, legal challenge and/or sanctions from Awarding Bodies or validating partner institutions**.**

12. Equality Impact Assessment Statement

The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out EIAs by law. The College does however, carefully consider the impact, when creating or amending its policies, on all concerned parties regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and records this at ELT meetings in order to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

13. Related Policies and Documents

- Higher Education Complaints Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Student Standards
- HE & Professional Admissions Policy

13. Appendices

Please refer to document below

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all staff involved in the assessment process to ensure that the principles and procedures in these regulations are properly and fully implemented.

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PART ONE

ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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1 INTRODUCTION

This section is a statement of the principles, practices and procedures governing assessment. It does not replace Awarding Body, Qualification Curriculum Authority or Quality Assurance Agency requirements regarding assessment or the assessment process.

Except where explicitly stated, this policy applies to ALL PROVISION where internal assessment forms a component that contributes in part or full towards the result/grade achieved by the candidate.

For the purposes of this and other College documents, 'assessment' refers to the internal marking/grading of any student(s') work produced as required by the course/Awarding Body/partner HEI, i.e. Portfolios, Essays, Assignments, Projects, Examinations, Case Studies, Oral and/or Aural Testing, Presentations, Performances, Displays, Practical Exercises, Exhibitions, Group Work, Professional Discussion(s), Artefacts, Video or Audio Recordings or any other method of assessment.

2 QAA UK QUALITY CODE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The expectations of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education relating to student assessment have been addressed by this policy as far as it is practical to do so. HE course teams and subject tutors familiarise themselves with the Code at first hand to implement assessment practice within the spirit of the Code. The Code contains expansion/explanation of issues related to the precepts which this policy does not reproduce.
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

All assessments must fulfil the following principles:

1 Assessment is the main vehicle for ensuring that the required academic standards are met, maintained and monitored.

2 Assessment is an integral and critical feature of the learning process. Consequently, the quality of assessment and feedback to students is of critical importance in the development of knowledge, skills and competence.

3 Learning for assessment is as important as the assessment of learning, therefore due attention must be given to explaining assessment requirements and techniques, to both staff and learners. Meeting with validating partners and awarding bodies, for a full explanation of their assessment requirements, will be a crucial factor in this.

4 Learning from assessment is a vital feature of development. Feedback must be given promptly (within partner HEI guidelines) in a manner and to a level of

sufficiency that enhances the learning experience of students/candidates. To be effective assessment and feedback must be evaluative but not be value-laden.

5 Assessments must be free from bias regarding protected characteristics. (** However, for the purposes of testing understanding or enhancing learning, assignments, examinations, case studies and other assessed work can contain examples of stereo-typical materials/ideas and/or bias, providing that the only reason for their inclusion is to test understanding or learning).

6 Sufficient and timely arrangements for any/all disclosed learning needs must be made for those students entitled to such arrangements.

7 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG)
It is good practice for Assessors to comment on spelling and grammar i.e. highlight mistakes on student work and expect the student to either correct them (at the formative feedback stage) or note them (at the summative feedback stage). Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

(i) The mistakes undermine the evidence of student understanding or,
(ii) Specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and /or correct use of technical language.

If a student continues to submit assessments that contain poor spelling, grammar or language this MUST be referred to the Higher Education Accessibility Advisor via the HE Hub referral system for a student support assessment.

For all partner university awarded programmes please refer and adhere to the partner university's SPAG policy.

4 GENERAL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSMENT

1 All provision/courses have a planned and published assessment process regarding timing, number of assessments and/or assignments, hand in dates. These will be published in the location appropriate to the programme, e.g. course Moodle page, course handbook, etc. Dates for the return of assessed work will be based on the standards and protocols laid out in the course handbook. (Also see parts 2 and 5 of the regulations)

2 Clear and effective processes and procedures for the submission and hand in of assessed work support the ease and robustness of assessment practice.

3 All students and staff are given a statement of the assessment requirements for their programme/course as in 1 above and be instructed in these. Grade descriptors and/or assessment criteria are published in course handbooks and/or assessment briefs.

4 All assessments have clearly identifiable tasks and grading criteria to ensure that staff and students are aware of the requirements of the assessment.

5 All assessments are marked and/or graded according to the assessment criteria set.

6 Penalties for late submission are explicitly stated in the course handbook. (See also part 5 of the regulations)

7 All assessments are conducted with rigour and fairness.

8 Feedback is provided on all assessments to a level and depth that ensures assessment is an integral and critical part of the total learning process.

9 Assessment decisions are standardised/verified/moderated according to the College's Internal Verification and Moderation regulations and any additional Awarding Body or validating partner requirements. (See also part 2 of the regulations)

10 Verification/standardisation/moderation processes are undertaken according to the principles and practices of the College's Internal Verification regulations and any additional Awarding Body or validating partner requirements. (See also part 2 of the regulations)

11 Performance and progress is raised directly and regularly with individual students.

12 Up-to-date, legible and accurate tracking documentation is used to monitor progress on assessments

13 Assessment outcomes must not be disclosed in any unauthorised manner to any unauthorised person(s).

14 All records of assessments must be secure and free from interference by unauthorised parties

15 The specific requirements of Awarding Bodies or validating partners regarding assessment not covered by this policy must be adhered to in meeting standards set externally.

16 Assessment decisions are reviewed to ensure that any bias and/or stereotyping is identified and eliminated.

17 Course teams annually review assessments and assessment procedures/processes regularly to ensure currency and validity.

18 Unit/Module certification processes must be in place to ensure students who leave their course of study early or transfer to another course/college, are accredited with their achievement to date, wherever possible

5 RECOGNITION / ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING INCLUDING EXPERIENTIAL (See also sections 6 and 7 of this section)

1 Recognition/accreditation of prior learning is encouraged as a valid process for recognising prior achievement and experience and remains current. The process of recognising prior learning in establishing the starting point for a qualification should take place at the start of the programme.

2 Generally, recognition/accreditation of prior learning (RPL/APL) can normally only count for up to 50% of the total award in question. In extenuating circumstances, the relevant Progress and Achievement Board can endorse up to 60% of credit for RPL/APL. However, Awarding Body Regulations must be consulted on this issue and will take precedence.

3 Validating / Awarding body regulations must be observed at all times when deciding the credit to be awarded for RPL / APL

4 Where the prior learning claimed is based on experiential learning (RPEL/APEL) the assessor(s) must have sufficient evidence on which to award the credits claimed: for example, a project, research report, or other substantial piece of work. Witness statements alone are not sufficient evidence for (RPEL/APEL) accreditation.

5 Properly evidenced/recorded professional discussions are a valid process for helping determine APL/APEL accreditation.

6 In order to ensure prior learning and experience is current and relevant to the qualification; evidence will only be taken from learning and experience in the most recent three years prior to the start of the programme.

7 The first stage of the process is for the applicant to propose the learning to be accredited to the relevant curriculum area, at least two weeks prior to the start of the course.

8 The Curriculum team will review the evidence provided and assess this against the criteria for the relevant module, unit or qualification. This should take two weeks to complete in order to meet the start date and induction part of the programme.

9 Where necessary the Curriculum Area will contact the Awarding Body, to confirm the suitability and currency of the evidence for RPL.

10 Any assessments or Units that are use RPL, as a form of evidence of attainment will be reviewed by the prescribed verifiers for that course area.

6 WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT

Work-based assessments are a valid and useful adjunct to any course of study at any level but the nature and scope of such assessment must be properly prescribed as follows:

1 The outcome of assessment(s) must be clearly identified, contribute coherently to the Programme of study and its aims must be appropriately assessed.

2 Responsibility for maintaining academic standards lies with the College and its staff in all areas of workplace assessment. Work placement partners staff can contribute to the grading of assessments, but that contribution must be verified by a member of academic staff.

3 Validating/Awarding Body and partner regulations on workplace assessment must be observed at all times.

4 The responsibilities of workplace partners must be clearly defined and explained to all concerned.

5 Students must be given clear guidelines on the place, range and scope of any Workplace assessment.

6 Students must be clearly informed of their responsibilities and entitlements under workplace assessment.

7 All those involved in workplace assessment must be appropriately competent, qualified and fully aware of the nature and type of assessment being undertaken.

8 Workplace learning partners must have the appropriate support measures in place to ensure the proficiency of their staff involved the process.

9 Appropriate and timely feedback must be given to work placement partners on the effectiveness and efficacy of their support and the outcomes of any assessment.

7 WITNESS STATEMENTS

1 Witness statements are a useful source of information regarding assessment, but they cannot be used as a replacement for either evidence on performance or academic attainment.

2 Providers of witness statements must be appropriately qualified to assume that role. This may be an assessor of a different qualification or module, a work placement supervisor, a technician, a Director, HE Co-ordinator or anyone else that has witnessed the performance of the student against given assessment criteria.

3 Witness statements must clearly define what has been done, why and where it was done and why it has met the requirements and the relationship of the writer to the student.

4 Witness statements can be supported by video or audio recordings.

8 VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND ELECTRONIC ASSESSMENT

Internal Assessments

1 All the general principles, procedures and practices in this policy apply to electronic assessment.

2 Where electronic assessment is used the assignment instructions must have a statement that submission implies that the work submitted is the student's own.

3 Any electronic system in use must have effective backup systems to ensure no work, feedback, records or other data/information related to assessment is lost.

4 Any electronic system in use must be secure from unauthorised access and have effective controls to ensure only authorised users have access and use at an appropriate level.

5 College, Awarding Body and Validating Partner requirements and regulations relating to the content and procedures for assessment, and electronic/on screen testing including invigilation, must be always adhered to.

9 SUBMISSION AND RESUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

1 The Assessor is expected to formally record the assessment result and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria.

2 Each learner should submit evidence towards the targeted assessment criteria, a signed and dated declaration of authenticity with each assignment which confirms they have produced the evidence themselves.

3 The assessor should then formally record and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria, complete a confirmation that the evidence they have assessed is authentic and is the learner's own work.

4 Students are allowed one resubmission of evidence for each assignment. Curriculum Managers and HE Co-ordinators can authorise a resubmission which ensures any resubmissions are fairly and consistently implemented for all learners.

5 A resubmission will only be approved if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension
(ii) The Assessor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
(iii) The Assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment
(iv) The evidence is accompanied by a signed-and-dated declaration of authenticity by the learner.

10 STANDARDISATION, VERIFICATION AND MODERATION

Standardisation

Standardisation applies to all provision in the College.

1 Standardisation is the method/mechanism/procedure whereby the multiple delivery and assessment of the same topic/subject/unit by different members of staff (including satellite sites) is co-ordinated, equitable and uniform.

2 The delivery team must establish processes/procedures to meet regularly to ensure uniformity of approach is established, achieved and maintained.

3 Delivery of the curriculum must be co-ordinated (subject to local need) before the programme commences.

4 Assignments/coursework/assessments must be standardised (subject to local need) prior to release/use.

5 A sample of assessment decisions should be made for each module, in order to standardise grades through a process of 'second marking', usually by members of the course team.

Verification

This is how assessments are monitored and reviewed to ensure that assessment and assessment processes/procedures are valid, consistent, equitable, current and sufficient. See part 3 of these regulations for further detail on the principles and practices related to internal verification.

It is the responsibility and duty of all assessors on all provision to ensure compliance with valid and authorised requests/instructions from an internal verifier/moderator.

Moderation

Moderation is the authorised adjustment of any mark or grade arising under the prescribed situations stated below.

1 Moderation procedures related to grades or marks will be instituted where one or more of the following situations arises

(i) Standardisation, verification or second marking reveal a significant variation of grades/marks.
(ii) Any authorised Awarding/Validating Body official instructs any authorised member of the College's staff to adjust the grades/marks on any set or batch of assessments, or parts thereof.
(iii) Any officially appointed external examiner engaged by the College from an HEI or other FEC recommends any authorised member of College staff to undertake moderation proceedings.
(iv) Where any student has instigated a successful appeal against an assessment outcome.

2 Further information regarding moderation including moderator's duties are contained in parts 2 and 3.

3 The rules and regulations for Exam and Awards Boards are laid out in part 3 of these regulations.

11 APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Internal Appeals

Students

NB *The outline procedures and stages for student appeals should also be published in the relevant course handbook.*

All students have the right to be accompanied/represented at all stages of an appeal against assessment outcomes. Appeals should be made within 7 days of the assessment result being published.

1 The outline procedure is:

(i) The first stage of an appeal is to the Curriculum Manager for Higher Education or HE Co-ordinator.

(ii) If not resolved a further appeal to the Director of Curriculum within 14 days. The Director of Curriculum can delegate this responsibility if appropriate and/or necessary.

2 If still not resolved a final internal appeal to the Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult and Curriculum Development If the official appeals system is involved the following further conditions apply:

(i) The course panel shall be made up of two staff from the course team, the Curriculum Manager for Higher Education or HE Co-ordinator, the investigating tutor and one other suitable member of staff. The appellant and/or representative must be allowed to present their case/evidence before a decision is made.

(ii) Where the Director of Curriculum / HE Review Panel stage is invoked the hearing must be constituted with the following members:

- Director of Curriculum, Curriculum Manager or HE Co-ordinator
- Member of staff in charge of the course
- Subject Tutor
- An independent third party not involved with the dispute at any previous stage.
- The appellant and/or representative must be allowed to state their case before a decision is made.

(iii) Where the Exam and Awards Board stage is concerned that board must be constituted according to College regulations in part 3. The appellant and/or representative can present evidence to the board.

3 Full written records of all proceedings and outcomes at all stages of an appeal must be kept.

4 Students must be informed in writing within 5 working days of the group meeting:

(i) The outcome of any stage
and
(ii) The rights available to proceed further if the dispute has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction.

External Appeals

As soon as an internal appeal is made students must be informed of their right to take the issue to an Awarding Body, if they wish, once all internal procedures are exhausted. Students must be given the information on how to proceed with such an action.

12 IRREGULARITY AND MISCONDUCT IN ASSESSMENTS

NB This section does not define irregularity or misconduct. It is only concerned with the procedures by which such irregularity or misconduct is handled. See part 4 for definitions.

All students have the right to be accompanied/represented in cases of alleged irregularity/misconduct.

Student Offences and Appeals

1 Irregularity and/or misconduct regarding externally set examination tests and/or any other forms of assessment are governed by the rules of conduct issued by the Joint Council for General Qualifications or the Validating Partner/Awarding Body concerned.

2 Irregularity or misconduct of any form regarding internally set assessment or examination has three stages of resolution

(i) Course Panel
(ii) HE Review Panel
(iii) The relevant Assessment/Exam Board

3 Any materials equipment or other evidence must be gathered by the tutor/invigilator responsible, and a short-written report of the incident produced. The report should explain the allegations made and reference the evidence provided. The report must be given to the Curriculum Manager Higher Education or HE Co-ordinator within 5 working days of the alleged offence occurring. Copies must also be sent to the Quality Office and the Examinations Officer.

4 If the irregularity is reported by a person(s) other than the tutor/invigilator a nominated person will be responsible for investigating and producing a report as under Point 3 immediately above.

5 Appeal procedures are the same as given in section 10 above.

13 GROUNDS FOR APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

NB The following grounds are not intended to be comprehensive or exclude any valid complaint. Where an appeal concerns grounds not covered below the relevant panel stage will decide on the validity of the claim.

Grounds for appeal against assessment decisions include:

(i) Work not assessed against the criteria set, or criteria are not in keeping with or not clearly defined from Awarding Body or validating partner's stipulations or grading boundaries.
(ii) Valid extenuating/mitigating circumstances have not been considered.
(iii) There is evidence of preferential treatment/bias towards other students.
(iv) Internal and/or external verification contradicts/questions assessment grades awarded.
(v) Valid/authorised special exam/assessment arrangements have not been arranged or implemented.
(vi) An irregularity and/or misconduct has arisen (see section 14 for examples).
(vii) There has been a failure or inadequacy in equipment, tools, resources relating directly to the assessment.
(viii) An irregularity or issue of misconduct has arisen.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review our internal HE complaints and appeals processes. Heart of Worcestershire College is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint or appeal, you may be able to ask the OIA for a review. You may do this once all internal College processes have been completed. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students

14 EXAMPLES OF IRREGULARITIES AND MISCONDUCT

The following examples are not intended to be comprehensive and are illustrative only. Circumstances and situations not appearing on the following lists could amount to valid irregularity or misconduct. For further guidance see part 3 of these regulations.

Examples of irregularities regarding internally assessed work:

(i) Assessments not conducted according to Awarding Body rules.
(ii) Deadlines not observed by staff and/or other students.
(iii) Extenuating/mitigating circumstances/special needs not in place/implemented appropriately.
(iv) Issues arising from any appeal against an assessment outcome.

Examples of Student Misconduct:

(i) Plagiarism of any type/sort/manner from any source.
(ii) Copying the work of other students.
(iii) Colluding to cheat in any form, way or manner.

(iv) Submitting work done by another person as the learner's own.
NB this includes submitting work that has been paid for from professional sources or generated by an Artificial Intelligence platform. For guidance on how Artificial Intelligence can be used ethically follow AI Policy for Staff and Students 2026.27

(v) Falsely claiming extenuating/mitigating circumstances to gain an unfair advantage in assessment outcomes.

(vi) Cheating in any form, way or manner.

(vii) Not citing text/quotes from published sources when borrowed for use.

(viii) Using unauthorised equipment, sources of information or other methods of cheating.

(ix) Bribing or attempting to bribe invigilators/tutors/teaching staff or any member of the College.

Staff Misconduct

Any member of staff who knowingly colludes in or ignores reporting malpractice or irregularity regarding assessments will be subject to normal staff disciplinary procedures.

15 PROTOCOLS FOR HANDLING APPEALS AND REGULARITIES

(i) All situations involving instances of assessment appeals/misconduct must be treated with absolute confidentiality.

(ii) Tutors/teaching staff (or any colleagues) must not attempt to subvert any appeal/investigation concerning assessment and/or misconduct.

(iii) All appeals against assessment/investigations into misconduct must be conducted fairly, without bias or discriminatory behaviour of any sort.

(iv) Any relationships (formal/social/personal) that could have an impact on any appeal /misconduct situation should be brought to the notice of the Director of Curriculum / HE Co-ordinator. They must then decide if an independent person should undertake the handling of the situation. The Director of Curriculum /HE Co-ordinator must exercise absolute confidentiality in such cases.

(v) In cases of extenuating/mitigating circumstances the reasons claimed by the student must be treated with discretion and confidentiality. Only those who need to know the reason should be informed. This information must be treated with absolute confidentiality.

16 PENALITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT – STUDENTS

The penalties and procedures are laid down in course handbooks and/or awarding body and/or related validating partner documents.

Although academic penalties do form part of the Colleges academic misconduct process the focus towards prevention of misconduct is key, therefore:

All students will have received study skills support through activity, the HE Academic Skills Programme, during Induction or soon after. Subsequent 'Jumpstart' sessions are made available to L4 and L5 students. Students are advised making use of the HE Proofreading Service via HE Hub hehub@howcollege.ac.uk

There are four stages to the formal process, all stages MUST involve unit/module leader, course leads and HE Coordinators:

(i) Verbal Warning, this stage will be accompanied by:

Students found to have plagiarised any aspect of their summative submissions will meet with the HE Engagement Officer to review their work and receive support regarding referencing to ensure the student is fully aware of how to avoid plagiarism. The meeting should take place within two weeks of the student being advised they are being referred for Plagiarism. This meeting will then enable subsequent assignments to avoid plagiarism.

(ii) First Written Warning

With penalties identified by the awarding body/validating partner e.g. capped pass grade assessment resubmission

(iii) Final Written Warning

With penalties identified by the awarding body/validating partner e.g. resit unit/module with fees.

(iv) Suspension or Expulsion

When the formal procedure is invoked, each stage must be precisely followed and recorded by unit/module leader, course leads and HE Coordinators.

PART TWO

INTERNAL VERIFICATION AND MODERATION PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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1 INTRODUCTION

1 This section prescribes the basic principles and procedures that must be observed and applied. Any further requirements/guidance from Awarding Bodies and the QAA must also be observed and implemented.

2 Internal Verification and Moderation will operate at the following levels within the College:
Cross College
Curriculum level
Course team level

The principles, procedures and tasks relating to these levels are developed in the respective sections below:

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INTERNAL VERIFICATION

Cross College level

As part of the committee structure for Quality Improvement and Academic Standards, the HE Academic Board will oversee, develop and audit IV/Moderation activity across the College.

Specific functions will be to:

(i) Monitor that this policy is implemented consistently and rigorously across the College.
(ii) Develop and disseminate good practice on Internal Verification.
(iii) Moderation, Standardisation and Assessment across the College.
(iv) Ensure the training and development needs for internal verifiers, moderators and assessors are being appropriately addressed.
(v) Monitor that changes of policy and practice from Awarding Bodies and QAA are disseminated and implemented.
(vi) Generate reviews and evaluations on assessment, internal verification, standardisation and moderation across the College as needed.

Curriculum Level

(i) All Directors of Curriculum have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this policy is adhered to within their Curriculum
(ii) It is the Director of Curriculum's responsibility to inform the Manager for Higher Education and HE Co-ordinator of critical reports on assessment/verification/moderation from whatever source.
(iii) It is the Director of Curriculum's responsibility to ensure sufficient staff are trained and qualified to fulfil their duties as required by this document.
(iv) The Curriculum Manager/HE Co-ordinator will:
- Liaise with the HE Co-ordinator Committee.
- Oversee assessment, internal verification and moderation practice to ensure compliance with this policy, Awarding Bodies and QAA.

- Facilitate the training and development needs of departmental internal verifiers/moderators.
- Monitor that assessment, standardisation, moderation and internal verification processes are effective.
- Help ensure that all assessors in their department have their training, support and advice needs identified and addressed.
- Immediately notify the Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult & Curriculum Development of any critical reports on assessment/verification/ moderation from whatever source.
- Ensure that a qualified countersigning internal verifier is designated in situations where a trainee internal verifier has yet to gain certification.

Course level

Each course team programme area must have enough designated assessors, internal verifier(s)/moderator(s) according to need. It is the responsibility of individual internal verifiers, moderators and assessors to ensure that award body requirements are met. All internal verifiers, moderators and assessors must be familiar with, understand and fulfil the following requirements for internal verification and moderation:

(i) Have relevant occupational and subject background and experience.
(ii) Have a thorough understanding and working knowledge of assessment, verification and moderation principles and practice.
(iii) Undertake appropriate development activities to ensure their competence is maintained.
(iv) Notify the Director of Curriculum/HE Co-ordinator of any critical comments concerning assessment/verification/moderation made by any External Verifier, Moderator or Examiner.
(v) Ensure that annual course reviews and evaluations fully address and report on issues regarding assessment, second marking, verification and/or moderation as applicable.
(vi) Ensuring that assessment, second marking, internal verification and moderation issues for each course are discussed and minuted at all course team meetings. Minutes must be written and stored in the course file.

3 PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES FOR THE MODERATION OF MARKS/GRADES

1 Moderation is the authorised adjustment of any mark or grade arising from the conditions stated in the Higher Education Assessment document and Procedures. (See part 1).

2 Moderation will be undertaken as appropriate on internally set and marked assessments as prescribed in part 1.

3 Moderation proceedings have two levels of resolution as follows:
- Course team
- Assessment Board

4 The regulations governing the proceedings and levels of moderation are prescribed in part 1.

4 DIRECT FUNDED PROVISION

1 The general principles and practices prescribed in Part 2 (pages 16-20) of this document must be observed for all direct funded HE provision.

2 Course teams are encouraged to develop links with External Examiners.

3 Should External Examiners be appointed they must be governed by an agreement that incorporates the precepts in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education as far as is practicable.

5 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

1 All collaborative provision must be governed by a written agreement that incorporates the precepts in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

2 If the provision is a franchise from or under the control of an HEI, their regulations as specified in the validation apply.

3 If the collaboration is with another/or other FEC's, moderation procedures should be undertaken across/between institutions, in line with good assessment practice.

6 VERIFICATION

NB Directors of Curriculum, Curriculum Managers and HE/Professional Co-ordinators must provide support and guidance for colleagues by undertaking the following activities.

Assessor Support

(i) Inducting new and/or trainee assessors.
(ii) Ensuring assessors are subject/occupationally qualified/experienced as necessary.
(iii) Ensuring assessors hold or are working towards appropriate assessor qualifications within a defined deadline.
(iv) Helping assessors interpret syllabus and assessment criteria.
(v) Advising on assessment plans and assessment planning.
(vi) Ensuring all assessors understand and apply relevant specifications criteria, accords and codes of practice as required.
(vii) Ensuring assessors have up to date information about external verifiers, moderators, external examiners and Award Bodies.
(viii) Attend meetings, course boards and assessment panels with partner HEIs, awarding bodies and external examiners, moderators and verifiers.

Maintenance of Assessment Documentation

HE/Professional Co-ordinators will work with course teams to ensure that:

(i) The Programme has a suitable system for recording and tracking progress and achievement.
(ii) The system enables students to receive feedback on their achievements and progress regularly.
(iii) Records of achievement are related back to the programme planning process to monitor quality.
(iv) The recording system enables students, assessors and verifiers to cross reference and find evidence and/or assignment criteria/outputs easily to monitor progress.
(v) All Award Body and course documentation is completed fully, regularly and in a timely fashion.

Verification of Assessment

The Director of Curriculum or Manager Higher Education must:

(i) Manage the overall quality of assessment and moderation in their respective areas.
(ii) Ensure assessment briefs/assignments are verified and fit for purpose prior to issue/release.
(iii) Ensure assessment judgements are standardised and valid.
(iv) Ensure the Programme Team meets regularly to discuss: assessment plans, processes and decisions, compare performance across subjects/topics and develop a shared understanding of standards and standardisation.
(v) Monitor assessment decisions through regular and sufficient sampling.
(vi) Identify and address issues arising concerning assessment.
(vii) Undertake verification in a professional and supportive manner.
(viii) Keep full records of moderation processes/activities/outcomes.
(ix) Manage their role in any appeals procedure in a prompt, efficient and effective way.

PART THREE

ASSESSMENT AND AWARDS BOARDS

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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4	**CHAIR'S ACTIONS**	**25**
5	**RECORD KEEPING**	**25**
6	**NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**	**25**

1 REMIT AND SCOPE OF BOARDS

NB Where a partnership agreement requires it, the rules/regulations of the Awarding/Validating body can replace these regulations.

To be the final internal decision-making body regarding the circumstances given below.

The principles, procedures and protocols stated below apply to all assessed course work that contributes to the final grade/award achieved by a student, for example:

(i) Progression from one year to another within a course/programme.
(ii) Final year/end programme results.
(iii) Course work for Higher National Diplomas and Certificates, Foundation Degrees, Degrees, Post Graduate courses.
(iv) Appeals from assessment decisions.
(v) Appeals from extenuating/mitigating circumstances decisions.
(vi) Adjudication on issues relating to academic misconduct.
(vii) Other judgments/adjudications concerning assessment decisions that fall within the remit of such boards as a part of other College regulations and procedures.

2 CONSTITUTION OF BOARDS

Boards should be chaired by one or more of the following: Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult & Curriculum Development, Manager for HE, Director of Curriculum or an appropriate Manager.

1 Other appropriate staff will attend as required depending on the range of results under adjudication. However, at least three members of any course team must be present unless the course team is smaller when all members must attend.

2 Where necessary members of staff from other department/functions can be co-opted to sit (e.g. Examinations officer, MIS Staff, Director of Curriculum and Vice Principals.

3 Where workplace assessment is concerned, employers or their representatives must be invited to participate in the Boards activity.

4 External Verifiers/Examiners **must** be invited to attend Boards where the award body they represent is part of the business of the meeting.

5 Any correspondence from an EV/EE concerning the results under adjudication must be disclosed to the Board and discussed.

3 FREQUENCY OF BOARDS

1 An end of year/course Assessment/Exam Board **must** be convened to adjudicate on and ratify results before the information is sent to the student and/or relevant award body.

2 Interim Boards may be convened semesterly or as appropriate/necessary.

4 CHAIR'S ACTIONS

In appropriate cases to avoid the unnecessary sitting of a full Board, ratification of a result(s) can be designated to individuals as a "chair's action".

1 Chair's action will normally only be used where a student is required to undertake further assessment or re-assessment.

2 Chair's action **must never** be used to adjudicate on matters of academic misconduct, to condone or in final appeals against assessment decisions/ mitigating circumstances

5 RECORD KEEPING

1 Full records/minutes must be kept for all sittings of Boards and copies kept in course files.

2 Records of the outcomes of chairs' actions must be fully recorded and copies kept in course files.

3 A copy of the ratified results from all Boards must be kept in course files/archives.

4 All the above records should be retained for an appropriate length of time, as specified by Awarding Bodies or Validating Partners.

6 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

1 Students **must** be notified of their results within five working days of the meeting.

2 Copies of results **must** be sent to the Senior Examinations Officer accompanied by Award/Validating body registration details**. (This condition also applies where the department/course leader returns results direct to the Award/Validating body)**

PART FOUR
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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B	**Plagiarism**	
C	**Collusion**	
D	**Falsifying data**	
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5	**PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**	**30**

1 INTRODUCTION

This section is to ensure both staff and students are aware of the seriousness of academic irregularity/misconduct and the consequences of such action.

2 PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS

1 The College regards all forms of academic misconduct as wholly unacceptable and contrary to the ethos, aims and principles of education, training and development.

2 The determination of whether cheating, plagiarism or any unfair advantage is in the first instance a matter for the course team or invigilator to determine. In the case of misconduct by staff the investigating officer has responsibility for the investigation.

3 An allegation of irregularity/misconduct is not the same as proof the incident took place.

4 The facts of the case must be established before any of the panels/boards described in the Assessment Principles, Regulations and Procedures are invoked. In the case of misconduct by staff "board" means any disciplinary panel constituted under the College's disciplinary procedures for staff.

5 No panel or board can make a decision on irregularity/misconduct before the incident has been investigated and the facts established to the best available evidence.

3 DEFINITIONS AND GUIDANCE

The following are the major categories of Academic Irregularity:

A) Cheating in examinations and other time constrained assessments

Cheating includes:

1 Communicating with or copying from any other candidate during an examination except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this e.g. group assessments.

2 Communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff.

3 Introducing any written or printed materials into the examination room unless expressly permitted by the Examination Board or Course Regulations.

4 Introducing any electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the Examination Board or Course Regulations.

5 Gaining access to unauthorised material relating to an examination before or during the examinations.

6 Obtaining a copy of an “unseen” written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release.

7 Obtaining in any other ways, the provision, or assistance in the provision, of false evidence or knowledge or understanding in examinations.

Guidance note:

In this context the term examination is deemed to include module examinations, external assignments or other tests carried out under examination conditions, whether internally or externally set.

Dealing with examination malpractice

Where an academic irregularity is suspected in an examination or supervised test carried out under examination conditions, the invigilator shall warn the candidate of their suspicions. The invigilator shall confiscate any relevant evidence (for example, any unauthorised material). The candidate shall be allowed to continue with the examination. However, if the candidate persists with the irregularity they shall be expelled from the room. If such action is necessary, care should be taken to ensure that the inconvenience and disruption to other candidates is minimised.

Externally set tests, examinations and assessments are governed by the rules issued by the Joint Council for General Qualifications or the HE Validating/Awarding body.

Following the incident, the invigilator or responsible person shall submit a full written report to the HE Co-ordinator, Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult & Curriculum Development and Examinations Officer.

B) Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves:

The deliberate, substantial and unacknowledged incorporation in a candidate’s work of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another. Examples of plagiarism are:

1 The inclusion in a candidate’s work of more than a single phrase from another person’s work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of sources;

2 the summarising of another person’s work by simply changing words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgements;

3 copying the work of another candidate, with or without the candidate's knowledge or agreement, in the former case both parties are guilty of plagiarism.

C) Collusion

Collusion includes situations where a student:

1 Submitting work as entirely their own, with intention to gain unfair advantage, work done in collaboration with another person; and/or

2 collaborating unfairly with another candidate in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other candidate's own unaided work; and/or

3 knowingly permitting another student to copy in whole or part their own unaided work.

Guidance note:

The college encourages all students to share ideas and exchange reference material **prior** to each student writing up **their own personal presentation** of an assessed piece of work. Some course teams may stipulate an assessment as 'Assessed Group Work'. Where this is undertaken, course teams MUST indicate the criteria and manner in which the work is assessed and the way in which individual marks are ascribed to members of the group.

D) Falsifying data

The presentation of data in laboratory reports, projects and other research based on experimental work falsely purported to have been carried out by the candidate or obtained by unfair means.

E) Personation

'Personation' is the legal term for what is usually referred to as 'impersonation'. Personation is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive, or gain unfair advantage. It may exist where:

1 One person assumes the identity of a candidate, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that candidate;

2 the candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for the person personated.

F) Bribery

Bribery of or any attempt to bribe any member(s) of staff or other student(s) in order to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment.

Bribery of or any attempt to bribe any member of staff to make unauthorised alterations to marks or grades.

Full guidelines on the Bribery Act 2010 are available at:
Anti Bribery Policy

4 STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Any deliberate/knowing involvement by any member of staff (or otherwise authorised person) in any of the above will amount to academic misconduct.

5 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH AND CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1 The procedures for dealing with Academic Misconduct by students are given in parts 1 and 3.

2 The consequences of Academic Misconduct by students are defined and delineated in parts 1 and 3.

3 The procedures for and consequences of academic misconduct by staff are those that are laid down in the College's disciplinary procedures/rules for staff.

PART FIVE
DEADLINES
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

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6	**APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF A GRANT FOR MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**	**34**
7	**COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**	**34**

1 INTRODUCTION

The setting of clear deadlines enables both students and staff to manage their workloads more effectively and efficiently. Both staff and students are entitled to clear guidelines on achieving this. Where partnerships exist with an external HEI or validating body, it is essential that their own policies on deadlines and late submission be adhered to.

2 EXTERNALLY ASSESSED WORK

1 All students must be notified as soon as possible of the dates set by Awarding Bodies for any externally set and marked examination(s)/test(s).

2 All students must be notified as soon as possible of the dates set by Awarding Bodies for the submission of externally assessed course work.

3 Students must be informed and reminded of their responsibilities regarding registration/examination entries at appropriate times during the academic year.

4 The rules and regulations on deadlines published by respective Awarding Bodies apply to all externally assessed/examined work.

3 INTERNALLY ASSESSED WORK

The principles and guidelines set out below apply to all assessments/assignments/ coursework that are internally assessed and form part or the whole of the result/grade/award/qualification gained.

1 All students must be warned of the existence of these regulations and their ramifications at their induction.

2 Course staff must ensure that any work internally marked but externally moderated/verified is marked and despatched to the Awarding Body (or their designated representative) according to the requirements published by the Awarding Body.

3 All HE Co-ordinators/course staff/subject lecturers must set and publish realistic deadlines for the submission of internally assessed student work as part of the assessment planning process.

4 Assessed work must be returned (or written feedback and grade given) to the student as soon as possible, but within 20 working days as a maximum, subject to moderation.

5 All deadlines must be set according to the needs of the course/programme of learning and the learners' needs, where appropriate. Assessments should be balanced across a course or programme to minimise "clumping" and provide a balanced workload for both learner and staff, if possible.

6 Deadlines can be set weekly, monthly, by semester, year or duration of programme, depending on the situation/circumstances.

7 Deadlines must be clearly specified on any assignment/course work briefs.

8 Deadlines must NOT exceed the duration of the course/programme funding/tuition fee period. (See extenuating/mitigating circumstances).

9 Deadlines set MUST be observed by all course staff to avoid litigation arising from an appeal against an assessment decision**.**

4 PROTOCOLS FOR DEALING WITH LATE WORK

1 Tutors/teaching staff have the discretion to refuse work which has not been submitted by the deadline, if Awarding Body/Validating Partners' regulations permit. This excludes extenuating/mitigating circumstances.

2 In cases where there are no accepted mitigating circumstances, penalising the grade/mark given to any student for late submission is only valid if Awarding Body/Validating Partner assessment regulations allow for it, if:

(i) Meeting a deadline is part of the grading criteria or grading protocols and
(ii) Such an outcome is clearly specified on the assignment/assessment/ course work brief.

3 In each case, it is imperative to adhere to the appropriate Awarding Body/Validating Partner assessment regulations regarding late work.

5 EXTENUATING/MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

1 Where appropriate, the assessor can agree to extend a deadline due to extenuating/mitigating circumstances, and this claim must be submitted in writing to the HE Co-ordinator (see point 6 below).

2 Normally, extenuating/mitigating circumstances should be agreed in advance and will normally only be allowed on one or more of the following grounds:

(i) Personal Health
(ii) Close Family Health
(iii) Bereavement of close relative/partner
(iv) Changes to personal or domestic circumstances that have detrimentally affected the student
(v) Caring Commitments
(vi) Excessive employment demands which were substantial and temporary
(vii) Problems with/failure of college-provided equipment or materials essential to complete the work

3 Other reasons may be raised and will be dealt with on merit.

4 When applying for an extension, students must provide a written request, and this must be signed by the relevant assessor or HE/Professional Co-ordinator.

5 Retrospective grants can be made in the case of unforeseen circumstances.

6 Claims for mitigating circumstances must be submitted by the course tutor/lead to the HE Co-ordinator, by deadline dates provided in course handbooks. The learner will need to complete and sign a mitigating circumstances form, and the tutor should attach independent supporting evidence ***that applies to the period of assessment in question***. This could include a letter of support from the learner's course tutor and support staff, doctor's notes, medical certificate obtained at the time of illness, etc.

6 APPEALS AGAINST THE REFUSAL OF GRANT FOR EXTENUATING / MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

1 Any student who is aggrieved at the refusal of a grant of extenuating/mitigating circumstances can appeal in the first instance to the appropriate Director of Curriculum /HE Co-ordinator.

2 Appeals under 1 must be dealt with within 5 working days.

3 Further appeals from the decision of the Director of Curriculum /HE Co-ordinator must be undertaken according to the arrangements under section 11 of the College's Assessment Policy.

7 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

1 Where the collaboration is under the control of another HEI and/or FEC the rules of the validating institution apply unless the agreement states otherwise.

2 Where partnerships are concerned the rules agreed by the partnership apply unless the agreement states otherwise.

3 Where the collaborative agreement/partnership is silent on deadlines the principles and provisions of these regulations apply.